

Frankford Arsenal, Building 301  
Southeast corner of Hagner Road and Thomas Street  
Philadelphia  
Philadelphia County  
Pennsylvania

HAER No. PA-74P

HAER  
PA,  
51-PHILA.  
693-P-

## PHOTOGRAPHS

## WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record  
Mid-Atlantic Regional Office  
National Park Service  
U. S. Department of the Interior  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

Frankford Arsenal, Buildings 301

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Location: Southeast corner of Hagner Road and Thomas Street  
Philadelphia, Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania

Quad: Frankford

Date of Construction: Between 1919 and 1921

Significance: Building 301 was constructed as the principal power plant for Frankford Arsenal, the U.S. Army's main supplier of ammunition throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The building provided steam and heat to buildings throughout the arsenal.

Historian: Patrick W. O'Bannon  
Principal Historian  
John Milner Associates, Inc.  
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## HISTORY

Work began on Building 301 in November 1919 and was completed in June 1921. The building served as a central power plant for the arsenal, supplying heat, steam, and compressed air to various buildings. The equipment in the building was frequently upgraded. In 1940, oil-burning boilers and other new equipment, costing over \$100,000, were installed. In 1945, the steel sash in the two-story main building were replaced with wooden units. In 1967, new boilers were installed. Other alterations include the demolition of free-standing brick smokestacks, each two hundred feet tall, ca. 1967.

## DESCRIPTION

Building 301 is a two-story steel frame building with brick curtain walls and a concrete foundation resting atop wooden piles. The building measures approximately 49 feet by 162 feet, with a tall, single story wing attached to the southwest that measures approximately 91 feet by 101 feet. The building has a flat composition roof with glazed monitors atop both the main building and the wing. Four steel stacks penetrate the roof of the wing. The building is utilitarian in appearance, with concrete parapets and a stepped brick and concrete parapet that masks the ends of the wing's roof monitor. A soldier course stringcourse is located at the heads of the first story windows, which are rectangular, with concrete sills and twenty-light steel sash. Large rectangular second-story windows with concrete lintels and sills and multiple-light steel sash. In the main block, each of these sash has been replaced by a pair of large wooden sash and the remainder of the original opening infilled with brick. Several single story support buildings are attached to the main block. These contain coal handling equipment, ash handling equipment, an ice house, and a transformer station.

The interior is largely open plan, with boilers, compressors, control panels, and other equipment. The boilers date from 1967. Little of the remaining equipment antedates the 1940s.

## SOURCE

John Milner Associates, "Historical and Archeological Survey of Frankford Arsenal," West Chester, PA: John Milner Associates, 1979.

Report prepared for the Department of the Army, Baltimore District, Corps of Engineers, Baltimore, Maryland. Copies on file at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, the Free Library of Philadelphia, and the Philadelphia Historical Commission.

For complete overview of site, see HAER No. PA-74.

